

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for managing a geographical distribution of business representatives, the method comprising:  
receiving a trace defining a closed geographical area;  
identifying at least one geographical unit within the closed geographical area;  
and  
modifying a stored characteristic of the geographical unit in response to an instruction from a user.

2. The method recited in claim 1 wherein modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

3. The method recited in claim 2 wherein assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit comprises substituting the business representative for a prior business representative.

4. The method recited in claim 1 wherein receiving a trace defining a closed geographical area comprises receiving a freehand trace.

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5. The method recited in claim 4 wherein the freehand trace is provided with a pen and digitizing tablet.

6. The method recited in claim 4 wherein the freehand trace is provided with a touch screen.

7. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

8. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

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9. The method recited in claim 8 wherein modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises removing the at least one geographical unit from the established set of geographical units.

1 10. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising updating an  
2 assignment of business representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in  
3 the established set of geographical units.

1 *sub A3* 11. The method recited in claim 1 wherein modifying the stored  
2 characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises adding the at least one  
3 geographical unit to an established set of geographical units.

1 *sub B2* 12. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying an  
2 assignment of a plurality of business representatives to a plurality of geographical units  
3 graphically.

1 *sub A4* 13. A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable  
2 program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system including an input  
3 device, a display device, a processor, and a storage device, wherein the computer-readable  
4 program includes instructions for operating the computer system to manage a geographical  
5 distribution of business representatives in accordance with the following:  
6 receiving a trace from the input device defining a closed geographical area;  
7 identifying at least one geographical unit within the closed geographical area  
8 with the processor; and  
9 modifying a stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit on the  
10 storage device in response to an instruction from a user.

1 14. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein  
2 modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises assigning a  
3 business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

1 15. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein  
2 the at least one geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

1 *sub B2* 16. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein  
2 the at least one geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

1 17. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16 wherein  
2 the computer-readable program further includes instructions for updating an assignment of

business representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in the established set of geographical units.

18. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for displaying an assignment of a plurality of business representatives to a plurality of geographical units graphically on the display device.

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19. A computer system comprising:

an input device;

a storage device;

a processor in communication with the input device and the storage device;

and

a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for operating the computer system to manage a geographical distribution of business representatives, the computer-readable program including:

instructions for receiving a trace from the input device defining a closed geographical area;

instructions for identifying at least one geographical unit within the closed geographical area with the processor; and

instructions for modifying a stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit on the storage device in response to an instruction from a user.

20. The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the instructions for modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprise instructions for assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

21. The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

22. The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

23. The computer system recited in claim 22 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for updating an assignment of business

3 representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in the established set of  
4 geographical units.

1 24. The computer system recited in claim 19 further comprising a display  
2 device in communication with the processor, wherein the computer-readable program further  
3 includes instructions for displaying an assignment of a plurality of business representatives to  
4 a plurality of geographical units graphically on the display device.

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